

Recession

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tears.

Economists say the Great Recession lasted from 2007 to 2009. In 2004, the median net worth of white households was \$134,280, compared with \$13,450 for black households, according to an analysis of Federal Reserve data by the Economic Policy Institute. By 2009, the median net worth for white households had fallen 24 percent to \$97,860; the median black net worth had fallen 83 percent to \$2,170, according to the EPI.

Algernon Austin, director of the EPI's Program on Race, Ethnicity and the Economy, described the wealth gap this way: "In 2009, for every dollar of wealth the average white household had, black households only had two cents."

Since the end of the recession, the overall unemployment rate has fallen from 9.4 to 9.1 percent, while the black unemployment rate has risen from 14.7 to 16.2 percent, according to the Department of Labor.

"I would say the recession is not over for black folks," Austin says. He believes more black people than ever before could fall out of the middle class, because the unemployment rate for college-educated blacks recently peaked and blacks are overrepresented in state and local government jobs

that are being eliminated due to massive budget shortfalls.

Maya Wiley, director of the Center for Social Inclusion, says the anti-discrimination laws passed in the 1960s took decades to translate into an increase in black economic security — and that was before the recession.

"History is going to say that the black middle class was decimated" over the past few years, Wiley says. "But we're not done writing history."

Goldring was born and raised in Baltimore, and her mother was single for much of Goldring's childhood. At 16, she dropped out of school and went to work cleaning hotel

rooms.

"That's when I first met white people. Some of them would stay a month at the hotel. They would have all their children with them," she remembers. "I thought, one day I'd like to hang out at a hotel."

She didn't know any middle-class people in her all-black neighborhood. "Where we lived, everyone struggled. We just struggled a little harder," she says. "If the lights stayed on for a whole year, if we didn't get put out, I thought we were doing really, really well."

"History is going to say that the black middle class was decimated"

Seeznin's

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tains. "I'm a victim of the violence that's been going on — as well as of these false accusations. To characterize me as gang associate is highly offensive."

"I have no sympathy for gang members," he says. "I believe people who are terrorizing the community need to be treated as terrorists and taken off the streets."

"Bars have never killed anyone. Parks have never killed anyone. Deal with the people who are the problem."

Shootings have occurred in many parts of the city, on neighborhood streets as well as near drinking establishments including: The Interstate Bar and Grill, The Good Call, the 82nd Avenue Bar and Grill, as well as downtown at Kelly's Olympian, the 915 Club, the Barracuda nightclub and the underage club The Zone. Response from the OLCC has varied. The 915 lost its liquor license immediately, for example, but others, such as the Interstate Bar and Grill, and the Good Call, remain open until 2 a.m.

Joyce Olivo, who runs Good Tyme Entertainment, helped organize a youth employment fair at Seeznin's during the day on a Saturday, and she held receptions there for two of her young performing artists.

"I've been to Seeznin's countless times



Sam Thompson and Joyce Olivo

and I've never felt unsafe," she told The Skanner News. "I've never seen any gathering of gang members or questionable people there ever. I was embraced by everyone there: by Sam, by his mother, by his sister. The people who went there were family, friends, longtime members of Portland's Black community."

"Sam's a very good person, and he really opened his place up to the community," says Olivo. "He's a young Black male in this city, trying to do good, and it's really sad that rather than lending him more sup-

There's a lot going on."

Roberts said AAAH has similar loans available up to \$30,000, for first-time homebuyers. She encourages anyone interested in buying a home in any part of the city to contact her for more information.

Prices for the one-bedroom homes start at \$160,000, with three two-bedroom homes priced from \$275,000.

Developed by local real estate investor Jim Winkler, the 57 homes on offer are about as green and energy efficient as you'll find anywhere, and they have the LEED

Love Your Natural Hair



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Renee Mitchell's exciting new project will look at the many issues surrounding Black hair, especially when worn in its natural state. The Natural and Proud People Inspiration project kicked off Wednesday with a Men Only discussion. Next up in the series of events is: 'Our Hair Yes!' "My kinky love affair with my hair," from 3 to 5 pm Saturday July 16 at Talking Drum café and Bookstore, 446 NE Killingsworth St.

At 21, pregnant with her second child, Goldring decided to get her GED. Then she went to community college, got a degree in secretarial work, and began a career.

She met her husband in 1983. He had a steady job as a heating and air-conditioning installer, and owned a brick two-bedroom home in Morgan Park, a leafy, integrated neighborhood.

With two incomes, money was not a problem. He liked to travel. She had never been

out of Maryland.

"I thought, 'Is this how rich people live?'" Goldring remembers. "From where I was to where I ended up, it was way different."

Her husband had been married before. As a condition of the divorce, his daughter's name was added to the deed of the house.

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Home

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year.

With one or two bedrooms, the development will probably appeal to young single professionals and couples, said Cheryl Roberts, executive director of the African American Alliance for Homeownership. <http://www.aaah.org/>

"They will be a great investment because that area is still being revitalized," Roberts told The Skanner News. "There are definitely benefits to living in that area near Mississippi and near employers such as Adidas, Kaiser and PCCs Cascade campus.

port, they condemned him right from the start."

Thompson hit out at city policymakers, saying Portland has its priorities wrong.

"Do you know bike lanes will get \$600 million over the next 20 years, but there is half a million for gang outreach for the next two years?" Thompson said. "Outreach organizations have to go to a bidding party to get any funding."

The City of Portland funds 10 outreach workers who serve at-risk youth across the city.

Despite Reese's letter, the Oregon Liquor Licensing Commission did not suspend Seeznin's license. Instead it placed seven stringent restrictions on the bar. The OLCC told Thompson that to continue as a bar he would have to:

Hire four DPSST-certified security people to be on duty Fridays and Saturdays from 9pm to close, and one DPSST-certified security person all other times

Institute a dress code. Anyone wearing "gang-related clothing" to be refused entry. The OLCC list of "gang-related" clothing

includes: "athletic jerseys...torn or ragged clothing, casual sweat pants or track suits, headwear of any kind, or street gang attire, including colors."

Wand everyone entering the bar and search all bags. Any person with a weapon (or prohibited item) to be refused entry for 24 hours

Use age verification equipment to check

"He's a young Black male in this city, trying to do good..."

the age of every patron

Shut down the bar at 11 pm, with the business to close at 11:30 pm.

The restrictions would effectively kill his business, Thompson says, so he will have to close.

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